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A LETTER

TO THE

PARISHIONERS OF LAWSHALL,

TELLING THEM WHY HE LEFT THEM AND
BECAME A CATHOLIC.

By EVAN BAILLIE, M.A.

LATE RECTOR OF LAWSHALL, SUFFOLK.

LONDON:
BURNS AND LAMBERT, 17 PORTMAN STREET,
PORTMAN SQUARE.

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PRINTED BY LEVEY, ROBSON, AND FRANKLYN,
Great New Street and Fetter Lane,

TO THE

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MY DEAR FRIENDS,

It was not my intention to say any thing more concerning myself than is contained in the short preface to my recently published Sermons.

I thought they would suffice as a memorial, as well as sample, of what I had tried to teach you; and that the known fact of my admission into the Holy (Roman) Catholic Church would of itself tell you *why* I had left you.

But it has been suggested to me by more than one whose opinion I value, that it was not doing justice either to you or myself, or, in fact, right as between man and man, that I should sever the sacred connection so long existing between us without giving you some account of the reasons which impelled me to do so.

I trust, therefore, that as this is my rea-

son for now addressing you, you will not think me egotistical if I try to show you how it came to pass that, after nearly eleven years' ministrations among you, and seven elsewhere, I felt called upon, out of regard for my own soul's welfare, to leave the "Church of England," and to fly for refuge into that which I believe to be the sole divinely-appointed Ark of Salvation.

It is not unknown to my oldest friends, that, very early in my ministerial life, I was in doubt regarding the claims of the Church of England to be considered a part of the Catholic Church. The secession from the ranks of the English clergy of some of its most eminent members had occasioned me much distress, and I felt very anxious in respect to what might be my own duty.

Like most of the young High-Church clergymen of the day, I entertained a very high admiration and regard for Dr. Newman; and well I remember the feelings of sorrow and dismay with which I first of all learnt that he entertained doubts respecting the Church of England, and at last that he had actually left her.

Still, there remained others equally respected, equally dear to High Churchmen, though not equally great in intellect, who

conceived that it was no duty, but the contrary, to do as he had done ; and so, whilst grieving for his loss, and feeling myself unequal to the task of deciding between such great minds, I took the not unnatural course of remaining at my post, trying to discharge the duties of my cure, and hoping that some less painful step than that of ruining my worldly prospects was really the right one.

Of course I read the reviews and strictures, or at least some of them, which shortly appeared, upon the secession of our chief; and it gave one a secret comfort to feel that his arguments admitted of an answer,—to be able to believe, in fact, that Dr. Newman had done wrong. His own work on Development came out soon after, and with a trembling heart I set to read it. To my relief, it did not appear as powerful as I had expected to find it; and, with the help of a review or two, I came to the conclusion that it was a failure, that it cut at the root of the argument from antiquity, and showed, or at least admitted, that it could no longer be urged in defence of certain doctrines taught by the Catholic Church that they had been taught “always, every where, and by all.”

During this time I had from ill-health

been obliged to resign my curacy, and for the same reason had gone on the Continent. The work on Development was my travelling companion ; and before I had finished reading it, the living of Lawshall became vacant and was offered to me.

I will not say that this may not have in some measure tended to the opinion I then arrived at regarding the force of Dr. Newman's arguments,—very likely it did influence me ; but I can truly say that I was not conscious of *resisting* the truth. I know I was afraid of it ; but I do not think I wilfully shut my eyes to it. My feeling was, that his arguments were not unanswerable, and that it was not my duty with my then knowledge to refuse the living. So I accepted it, and came to Lawshall. What has passed outwardly since then you know nearly as well as myself. You know that I was not long in returning to England, and trying to do some good amongst you ; and that from that time to the period of my resignation, I did on the whole endeavour (notwithstanding a thousand faults and shortcomings) to teach you the good and the right way to walk in.

But you must not suppose that during all this period I had no return of my earlier

doubts and difficulties. From time to time they visited me, as the different events occurred which for a while agitated the minds of English Churchmen, and then allowed us, if we pleased, to fall back into our usual modes of thinking.

The compulsory appointment of Dr. Hampden to a bishopric was one of these events. The Gorham decision was another. The first of which showed that it was an impossibility for the Church of England to refuse consecration to the prime minister's nominee, no matter who he might be, or of what false doctrine he might be suspected: and the second, that denial of an article of the Creed was no bar to holding preferment in the Church of England; that the Church of England had no fixed doctrine in regard to the "one baptism for the remission of sins," and that her clergy might teach that children are "by baptism regenerate," or *are not*, whichever they pleased; that it was consistent with her formularies to teach the truth, or its opposite heresy; in short, that there was no necessity for them either to hold or teach the one Catholic faith.

How could any man who valued truth, who believed in "one faith," be happy under

such a condition of things ? The wonder is that any could have rested, until they had either cleared their Church from such a dreadful imputation, or cleared their own consciences by seeking refuge elsewhere. But men do not always act up to their professed principles, or even quite believe in them. When the time comes for acting upon them, the best intending are apt to flinch from their own conclusions : they seem spell-bound, so to speak ; either their worldly affairs—as I confess was the case with myself—become, as it were, a web too strong for them to break through ; or they become tired of resistance, and think they must make the best of things ; or they yield to the persuasions and examples of others, who, they think, ought to be as good or better judges than themselves ; or they quiet themselves with the idea that perfection is to be found nowhere ; or they think that where there is a *doubt*, they have a right to the benefit of it themselves. Whatever may be the cause, they give up resisting, and too often inquiry also. They say there is no use in spending their whole life in a fruitless struggle against a power which is too mighty for them : and so, notwithstanding their own declared convictions and pledges as to what

would be their duty under such and such possible circumstances, when those very circumstances have come to pass they still remain where they were, they still cling to the forlorn hope that the “Church of England” will be able to right herself at last ; when, alas, all that has been for years going on should have made them sternly face the question, and determine, with God’s help, to arrive at a satisfactory answer, Is the “Church of England,” as by law established, really the Church of Christ at all ? Are not all the lamentations of good men, and their fruitless efforts to cure the evils which surround them, in reality indications of Providence that they should seek a surer and a better home ?

Up to this time, and for some time after, I do not remember that I had ever read—with the exception of the work on Development just mentioned, and one or two other writings of recent converts—any controversial Roman Catholic work ; and therefore, like many others, I could only judge of their arguments and representations by the criticisms of Protestant writers.

I do not mean that these criticisms are intentionally unfair ; but I do wonder that in a matter of such unspeakable importance any

educated person who makes the smallest pretension to an inquiring mind, or to be anxious for the truth, should rest contented to see only one side of the question, or that he should not practically apply that tritest of all observations—that every man's story seems true till his neighbour has had a hearing.

But so it was in my own case,—and so I fear it is in very many others,—I fancied myself tolerably acquainted with (Roman) Catholic arguments when almost all my knowledge of them was derived from Protestant authors. If this, then, should ever meet the eye of any one whose belief in the soundness of his own views and the “corruptions of Popery” rests upon no better ground, let me entreat him to do that which in common fairness he would be the first perhaps to recommend in any other kind of controversy, and that is, to “hear the other side,”—to let his theological opponent speak for himself; and to take the trouble, in a matter so vitally important to himself, to ascertain all that can be said against him.

It was not until the agitation caused by Archdeacon Denison's sermon upon the Holy Eucharist that I determined upon adopting such a course for myself.

The publication of that sermon, or rather the controversy to which it speedily gave rise, revived all the dormant doubts and anxieties of my mind.

I could not read that sermon, and its defence by its author and others, without soon perceiving that substantially Archdeacon Denison was right. Whether it was wise or expedient in him (and I do not say it was not) to insist so strongly upon the point of *what the wicked receive* in the Holy Communion, may admit of different opinions; but to my mind it presented itself almost as *the test* of faith in the Real Presence. It made me think of what the Blessed Sacrament was objectively—*i. e.* in itself, irrespective of the receiver's state of mind—not merely *subjectively*, which I fear was the only point of view from which I had previously regarded it, being misled by a wrong interpretation of the word *faithful*—“taken and received by the faithful”—in the Church Catechism, which I took to signify only those who had “*lively faith*,” not “*the faithful*” in its technical sense—viz. Christians—which upon reflection I believed to be the correct one.

I little thought at the time how much this would affect my after course, and how at the

last it was to become the very starting-point, so to speak, of a new existence. To inquire upon this point, was to touch perhaps the most vital point of the Church of England; but I did not see it then, nor till some time after. I felt, indeed, that the Church of England's teaching upon the subject was confused and contradictory, and I knew that many High Churchmen bemoaned the alterations which had been made in the Communion Office more, perhaps, than any other alteration effected at "the Reformation." I only at the time rose higher in my belief of the Blessed Sacrament, which probably was all the effect aimed at by the author.

But I was now quite in earnest in my desire to know the truth, and the whole truth; and it soon became evident to my mind that the controversy between England and Rome (as I then expressed myself) lay not so much in this, or in any other particular doctrine, as in that which was at the very root of the Church of England's existence as a Church, viz. whether the Bishop of Rome, as successor to St. Peter, were not the divinely-appointed Centre of Unity and Visible Head of the whole visible Church of Christ upon earth. If the Bishop of Rome's claim were a divine one, *i.e.* if

Christ really had instituted a visible head and centre of unity, with which all Christians were bound to be in communion, then there could be but one thing for all who were separated from this head and centre to do, and that was *to return to it*. Therefore to this point I turned my careful attention, praying God to show me the truth, and to deliver me from error, if, owing to my birth, education, or other cause, I had fallen into it.

I suppose it was somewhat previously to this, or concurrently with it, that I read (the Protestant) Collier's History of England during the Period of the Reformation; and great indeed was my surprise and shame at the discoveries I there made concerning that memorable and most disastrous epoch.

From my earliest entrance upon controversial theology my standing-ground had been that the Church of England had reformed herself; that her Bishops and clergy, moved by the good Spirit of God, had been led to see “the corruptions of Christianity” which had been brought about by “the rapacity and wickedness of the court and Church of Rome;” and that, under the same holy influence which had thus opened their eyes, they were still further moved to cast off all these “errors

and corruptions," and restore religion to its ancient and scriptural form. What, therefore, was my surprise when I found that, so far from this having been the true state of the case, or a true account of the Reformation, it was the very opposite of truth: that the Church of England, as represented by the Bench of Bishops (one Bishop only excepted) and the Lower House of Convocation, refused to take part in Queen Elizabeth's reformation, that they were deprived in consequence, and that even the one conforming Bishop afterwards refused to join in consecrating other Bishops for the queen; that the universities of Oxford and Cambridge remonstrated; and that a great number of Church dignitaries and beneficed clergy did the same, and were deprived!

How, then (I asked myself), can it possibly be said that the "Church of England" reformed herself? I felt convinced that she had done nothing of the kind; that Henry VIII. and Elizabeth were the real Reformers; and that their despotic wills had been the standard and measure of the Reformation.

Well could I then understand why the Catholic party, in the disorganised state of society which then was, should for a time have

communicated with Elizabeth's clergy : because the real character of the movement was not then fully known ; and because the Pope, in his anxiety not to make the breach irreparable, would not till the queen had rejected all his overtures, and whilst any hope of reconciliation remained, command the faithful to withdraw from her communion.

Here, then, I felt the ground sink under my feet. As a High-Church Anglican I had always maintained that the Church acts, and can act, only collectively and by representation in Convocation ; and no argument or representations that I have yet seen can do away with the fact, that the Church of England in the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign, so represented, and so acting in her collective capacity, did not only not aid or countenance the Reformation, but that she set herself most decidedly against it.

If, then, the Reformation were to be justified at all, I felt that it could not be upon *my* ground, viz. that the Church of England had reformed herself ; and so my standing-ground was gone.

But this, as I have before intimated, was of minor importance to the question, whether or no the Bishop of Rome were the divinely-

appointed centre of unity ; and my investigations and study led me to an equally unfavourable conclusion for the “Reformed Church of England” on this head also.

It is not my intention to produce here the arguments from sacred Scripture and the writings of the Fathers in favour of the doctrine of the Pope’s supremacy ; but any one anxious to know the truth may learn enough (I think) to convince him of its agreement with holy Scripture and antiquity by reading two works of Mr. Allies,—the one entitled *St. Peter the Rock*, in which an amazing amount of purely scriptural evidence is brought to bear on the subject ; and the other *The See of St. Peter*, which proves beyond all dispute, that from the earliest times the Bishops of Rome have been considered the successors of St. Peter, and that a degree and kind of supremacy was attributed to them, as well as claimed and exercised by them, over the whole of Christendom, absolutely irreconcilable with any Protestant theories, even with those which go furthest in their concessions to the Bishop of Rome as the Bishop of the principal see, and intelligible only upon the principle that our Blessed Saviour constituted St. Peter first of all, and after St. Peter his successors in the

see of Rome, the visible centre of unity to the whole Church on earth.

I was formerly, and am still, aware that passages may be produced from many of the Fathers which speak of Christ Himself, or of the confession of faith which St. Peter made, as being in a certain sense “the Rock” upon which our Lord said He would build His Church (which no one would wish to deny). But what is still more to the purpose is, that passages may be found in the works of these very same Fathers which speak of St. Peter himself as “the Rock;” and that when our Lord spoke those memorable words to him, *“Thou art Peter; and upon this Rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it: and I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven,”* He did then and there promise to St. Peter that which He never promised or gave to the other Apostles, which was the especial honour and prerogative of being the visible foundation and head of Christ’s visible Church;—not of course to the exclusion of the great corner-stone and great Head of the Church, viz. Christ Him-

self; but as participating with Christ, by virtue of Christ's own will and appointment, in His character of "the Rock," and as representing Him upon earth: and that just in the same way as Christ's promises to the Apostles generally were not confined to them, but continued to *their* successors,—the Bishops in general; so the promise made to St. Peter was meant by Jesus Christ to be continued to St. Peter's successors; and that by virtue of that promise, the Bishops of Rome, ever since St. Peter's decease, have been the divinely-appointed sources of spiritual jurisdiction and centre of unity to the whole Catholic Church upon earth.

It appeared to me impossible to resist the evidence, both from sacred Scripture and antiquity, which Mr. Allies and others have brought to bear on this point. It was only a short time after Dr. Newman's secession that the same Mr. Allies published what was considered a most able defence of the Church of England on this very point. In his work entitled *The Church of England cleared from Schism*, he had, as it was thought, proved that the Bishop of Rome's claims were not borne out by the history of the early Church; and great were the congratulations of Anglican

clergymen. But that which had often happened before, happened also in his case. His researches led him to the very opposite conclusion to that which he purposed to defend. He was compelled by the force of truth to admit his error; and though all his worldly prospects, and the very maintenance of those dependent on him, were at stake, he shortly afterwards gave up his preferment, and sacrificed his all in this life, that he might no longer be separated from Christ's own appointed centre of unity and source of grace. To my mind, therefore, feeling as I then did that every thing depended upon this question, there remained little doubt that the separation from the Bishop of Rome and the rest of Catholic Christendom, which was effected at the Reformation, was wholly unjustifiable; and that even if all the charges of error in doctrine and corruption in practice then brought against the Catholic Church had been true, the sin of schism caused by the separation only made matters worse; that it was like private individuals "taking the law into their own hands;" and that the subjugation of the Church of England to the temporal power which then followed and has continued ever since, and the manifold and increasing evils

thence flowing, were only the natural produce of the seed then sown, and that there was no way of curing those disorders but by returning to the source of unity which we had forsaken.

Still, although this then dawned on my mind as an inevitable necessity to be encountered sooner or later, and as the only cure of our disorders; and although I felt, what is logically true, that once admitting the *authority* of the Catholic Church, the other points of difference between her and us must be yielded upon that authority,—it was some time before my mind was brought to a fit state to act upon it, or to see that the first step in my own path of duty was to beg reconciliation with the Mother Church.

I fancied that however wrongly the Church of England—viewing her still as a “Branch Church”—may have acted at the Reformation, it was not perhaps the duty of individuals to undo it, except by striving to bring the whole Church of England to see and amend her fault; and that our duty meanwhile was to teach the whole Catholic faith, so far as it did not contradict any positive law or direction of the Church of England, and to look forward in hope to a better time, when the

whole Church of England, acting in her corporate capacity, would, by some means or other, effect the desired reconciliation.

But it required only a little calm reflection to discover the hopelessness of this expectation. For who can think of the present condition of the Church of England, the erastianism of its rulers, and the opinions of its clergy,—making every allowance for the well-intentioned but feeble and hopeless resistance of a certain portion of the clergy and laity, or the efforts to revive Convocation,—without feeling that there is but one thing, viz. the separation of Church and State, which can ever make the Church of England, as a body, even desire to act for herself? and that were this separation to take place, so complete is her internal disorganisation, that any effort on her part to act for herself must inevitably issue in her falling to pieces; that, in fact, the very bond which, as an Anglican High-Churchman, I felt to be as “iron entering into my soul,” because it was the badge and proof of my Church’s subjugation to the State, was in reality the condition of her very existence; that without it she would of necessity fall a prey to the elements of discord and division within her, which, even with this

restraint, are almost more than she can bear the strain of, and are continually threatening her with some violent disruption ?

I believe there are many members of the Church of England, both clergy and laity, who feel deeply her degraded position, and would gladly, if they could, raise her out of it. Having been brought up in, or adopted, Anglican principles, and believing the Church of England to be a real Branch of the Church-Catholic, they cannot but deplore the condition in which they behold her ; but they attribute that condition not to any fault on the part of the Church of England herself, but to the faults of her members. They think that were they only true to her principles, they would assert their mother's spiritual independence ; and that a united and determined stand on their part would be sure to regain a portion at least of her lost liberty. Such was my own too sanguine opinion for some time ; and such probably it would have remained till now, had I not inquired more carefully than before into the nature of the Reformation, and the kind of supremacy then claimed by and conceded to the Crown. I verily believe that if any one will take the trouble to go fairly into this inquiry, he will find that the supremacy

now exercised, and which High Churchmen consider so cruel an usurpation and tyranny on the part of the Crown, is by no means an excessive exercise of the power and authority at that time conceded by the Church of England ; but that, on the contrary, if the civil power thought fit to do so, it might go still further in the same direction without exceeding the letter or spirit of the laws then made and never since repealed, and to which we have committed ourselves by the Oath of Supremacy. But High Churchmen do not, or will not, see this. Believing rightly in the Church's spiritual independence, they think it only requires honesty and zeal on their parts to obtain, sooner or later, a recognition of their Church's rights : whilst they forget to ask themselves, or at least to go thoroughly into the inquiry, whether the Church of England as by law established, to which they belong, be in very truth a continuance of the Church of Christ which existed in this land previous to the Reformation ; or whether it be not a different society altogether,—a society similar, indeed, in certain external marks, but in reality totally different from that which it supplanted ; being, in fact, the creature of man, *i. e.* of a despotic sovereign and a tem-

poral legislature, and not in very truth the kingdom of Christ upon earth.

There is no view of their Church's origin and condition which High Churchmen more heartily resent than this ; and no one could more zealously have repudiated it than myself. But truth will in the end prevail, if people will be at the pains to search for it ; and my earnest counsel to those who conscientiously believe (as I did) that the Church of England is the true representative of the old Church of Christ existing in England up to the Reformation is, to inquire for themselves what became of the old Church of England when the whole Bench of Bishops and the Lower House of Convocation (to say nothing of the Universities and the greater portion of the beneficed clergy) repudiated and refused to take any part in Queen Elizabeth's reforms, and in consequence of their refusal were deprived of their sees and benefices, and obliged either to quit the country or retire into private life. *What became of the old Church of Christ in England then ?*

Can it with any reason be pretended that the new religious communion which Elizabeth and her Parliament then created, and called the "Church ' of England," and for

which she could only with the utmost difficulty obtain episcopal government, was the true and legitimate successor and representative of that which was thus forcibly driven out ?

Here then, again, the ground sank under my feet when I tried to persuade myself that our duty was not to leave the Church of England, but to try to bring her to a right mind, so that she might, in her corporate capacity, set herself to undo the evil to which she was unhappily committed. For if the Church of England be not the continuation of the old Church of Christ in England, who and what is she ? and what have we to do with her any longer in her corporate capacity, except to pray God that the delusion may be removed from her eyes, so that one and all of her members may be brought to see the truth, and to escape from their perilous position ? So at least it appeared to me ; and when friends said, " You will only make matters worse by going ; if all who see and bewail our evils go, what hope is there of those evils being ever cured ?" I seemed to hear a voice saying to me, " What is that to thee ? follow thou Me." " God does not need you to work out His designs. Look to your

own soul's welfare, and secure that ; *that* is your duty,—do it."

I do not now remember the exact stages by which these and other doubts and difficulties passed through my mind ; but it was not long after the commencement of the restoration of our church at Lawshall that they began to make me very unhappy ; for I could not but see a cloud in the distance, every day drawing nearer and nearer, and increasing in blackness. I hardly know how it was that I went on with that work, except that I felt it was intended for the glory of God, and that somehow or other God would accept it and overrule it for good. As to any expectation that I should *long* continue to exercise my ministrations in it, I had next to none. I felt bound to go on with the inquiry upon which I had entered ; it seemed as if I could not resist the impulse to do so ; though all the time I felt and knew that I was like a man sawing off the branch on which he was seated, yet I sawed on and on. And still at moments I felt the *possibility* of arriving, after all, at an opposite conviction ; and whilst this possibility remained, I tried to act as if I had faith. Sometimes a new argument gave me a little confidence in the soundness of my

position, or I met with earnest and excellent men who did not seem to feel my difficulties ; and I acted upon *their* faith when my own was almost gone, or some external circumstance occurred to brighten up my hopes, and to make me for a little while forget my one great trouble.

The re-opening of the church, and the heart-stirring services which followed it, helped me in this way more than any thing else ; not that it took away my care, for it could not do that. That was a great and joyous day,—a day never to be forgotten,—a day, at least, not likely to pass from the memories of many who witnessed that re-opening. It was a great day, for it was one on which an honest endeavour to carry out the truth was supremely successful. For then were Church principles put forth without disguise, and their power to influence and carry with them *the hearts* of men was exhibited. I do not mean that Church principles, as understood by Anglicans, are “the whole truth,” or all that is necessary,—far from it ; but I do believe that the seed* of the whole truth—the acorn which

* The foundation of what are called “Anglican,” or “High-Church” principles consists (as it has always appeared to me) in a recognition of the principle laid down

is in time to produce the mighty oak—is in that system ; that it is a considerable approach to Catholic truth ; and that it only wants “the single eye” and “the single heart,”—the single eye to inquire and to follow out those principles to their just conclusions, and the single heart to embrace and act upon them,—and, by God’s mercy, they will be the sure means of opening the door of truth, of removing from eyes that wish to see the thick veil of prejudice with which a Protestant education has blinded them.

Who could witness that re-opening, and not say that the power of religion was there present ? Who could witness its effect on the multitude then assembled in that country parish, and not say that there exists in religion a power to “make glad” as well as to captivate the heart of man ? The cloud in in our Blessed Lord’s own words, “Tell it to the Church,” and “If he hear not the Church, let him be to thee as an heathen man and a publican ;” in contra-distinction to the Protestant principle of private judgment. The consistent following-out of the former principle leads inevitably to submission to the (Roman) Catholic Church ; but the mere Anglican stops half-way. He says, with our Blessed Lord, “Hear the Church ;” but he leaves you no Church to hear : his Church being, in fact, a mere abstraction,—the Church of “the first three centuries,” or some other impalpable and undiscernible authority,—whose voice even those who are most anxious cannot discover, or consequently obey.

the distance, though still there, still visible, seemed to tarry ; and conscience telling me that I sought God's honour and glory and the good of men, I was not anxious what might come of it.

And after the church was opened, you know its doors were seldom closed by day ; and no one day passed that some of us at least did not meet to offer up our hearts and voices to God in prayer. As a parish you answered, and more than answered, dear friends, my utmost expectations. Some of you, it is true, did not like the non-appropriation of the seats, and the dissatisfaction* which began on this ground afterwards extended, to my regret, to other points ; but though I was somewhat pained at this, it did not deprive me of the gratification I felt at seeing the value which the parishioners at large attached to what had been done for them, and the pleasure they evidently took in their restored church and inspiriting services. Never during my recollection was the church so crowded,

* I should not have thought it necessary to make further allusion to this "dissatisfaction," had it not been reported that I had resigned my living in consequence of it.

I will only add, that *there is not the slightest truth in such a report.*

nor more external signs afforded of your being profited by the worship you took part in. I thank God from my heart that it was so. I humbly trust, too, that some good seed, hereafter to bring forth much fruit, was then sown in your hearts.

“And why did you, then, leave us as sheep without a shepherd ?” some one may ask. “Why, when all seemed going on so well, did you throw it all up, and leave us to take our chance as to who might come in your stead, and what might be our future services ?”

Do you think, dear friends, I never put these questions to my own heart ? Do you think I did not ask myself again and again, “Can you dare to go away now and leave them ? Are you justified in throwing all that is now so fair and promising into confusion ? Have you a right, even if there be danger for the vessel in which you are embarked, to take the life-boat yourself, and leave the crew and passengers to their fate, when you, as their captain, ought to stand by your ship to the last, and be the last of all to escape out of it ?” Indeed I asked myself all these, and many more questions, with an intense feeling of their solemnity ; and it was only because I felt I was still bound in duty to leave you

that I did so, or that I *dared* to leave you. I did not leave you until I felt my own soul in danger by remaining longer. I did not go until I felt I could no longer remain without sin, until I doubted whether I could be present at the celebration of the Holy Eucharist without sinning. How this came to pass I will tell you presently; when it did, I felt the time could not be distant for me to depart.

The result of our frequent and beautiful services upon my own mind was that which they were intended, if possible, to produce upon yours, viz. to make you think more and more of heavenly things; to raise the desires of your souls from the poor perishable things of time and sense to those far higher and nobler objects which Christianity has revealed to us as our present privileges and future inheritance: and dwelling almost continually upon some one or other of these, I was inevitably led to think of the different views taken on some of them by the Catholic Church and ourselves.

The assembling of ourselves together, *e. g.* upon Saints' Days, led me to think more of those holy servants of God whose virtues we commemorated, and to dwell more upon that holy and mysterious communion which still

exists between us and them in the mystical Body of Christ: and from thinking of them in their present happiness it was only a small step to think of the time when we hope to see them, and to be admitted into their holy company; or to think of the interest which they still take in us, and of the probability of their being anxious to assist us in our struggles; and then, if (as one might feel sure was the case) they were thus interested in our welfare even now, to ask oneself whether there could be any harm in asking them to pray for us, and upon what the Protestant objection to praying to them was based; and whether in truth it was any derogation to the honour or efficacy of our Blessed Saviour's all-prevailing and solely meritorious mediation—as the one Mediator between God and man—to ask those holy ones, who are at rest and nearer God than when in the flesh, to pray to God for us. Why should it be (I asked myself) any derogation to His most blessed mediation to ask for their good offices, any more than to do that to which no good Protestant would object, viz. to ask for the prayers of any good Christian man and woman now living, upon the express scriptural ground that “the prayers of a righteous man avail

much" with God? Common sense seemed to answer, that if the intercession of a living man or woman could not interfere with or take from the honour of Christ's mediation, so neither could prayers offered to Christ for us by the saints in Paradise ; that, in fact, the mediation of our Blessed Saviour—which is the only mediation which ever could have sufficed to make God and man *at one* again—is so absolutely and totally distinct from every other, that it is only ignorance and want of reflection which could make one for a moment suppose that the prayers of His members to their Great Head for each other, or of those in a higher state of grace and bliss in behalf of those in a less happy state, should be in any way displeasing to Him, or derogatory to His glory.

And then I thought of one, no longer in the flesh, but who whilst living loved me with no common love, and who I felt sure could not but feel an even intenser interest in her children than when she was with them : and I asked myself, Can it be otherwise than that she should pray for me still ; and would it be wrong if, in my daily strife, I should say, "Dear mother, pray for me. If you, dear mother, are now nearer Christ (as I trust you

are), and your prayers in consequence more availing with Him, pray for me, pray for your child, that he may see his way to Christ, and be enabled to walk along it"? Would this be wrong? I asked myself; and if so, why? It may perhaps be *useless* (something seemed to answer); she *may not* hear you. But conscience never answered, It would be wrong. And if it would not be wrong, but only natural; if it would only be a realising to oneself of that intimate nearness and relationship vouchsafed to Christians in the communion of saints, which death itself cannot sever, thus to hold communion with a loved parent gone before one into the unseen world,—why, I asked, should it be wrong to hold the same communion with any or all of God's saints? Why may I not think of them as still interested in, and still loving, all who are trying to love Christ? *Why* may I not say to them, "Ye saints and angels, pray for me; especially thou, O holy Mother of my Divine Saviour, who calls us all His brethren, pray for us, who by Baptism have been made your children, because by Baptism we were made members of your Divine Son"?

And then I thought of the objection that to suppose the Blessed Virgin capable of hear-

ing our prayers is to attribute to her one of the attributes of the Most High—*omniscience*. But a moment's reflection should suffice to show the groundlessness, or rather the *absurdity*, of such a supposition ; for how can this be *omniscience*? Omniscience is to *know every thing* : but to be able, through a communicated faculty, to hear prayers said to her at the same time from all parts of the habitable globe, or other spheres, is no more *this power* than the wonderful discoveries made by means of the telescope, or even our own knowledge, are *omniscience*; for these, being all *finite*, are *equally* remote from that which is infinite. And when we think how wonderful, how almost surpassing belief, have been the discoveries which men have made by science ; and how we seem able, by means of the telescope, to see even into sun, moon, and stars, how thoughts are made to travel and express themselves almost with the speed of lightning to our fellow-mortals in far distant lands,—is it much to suppose that those blessed and powerful spirits who are about the throne of God, and execute His every wish, should receive power from Him to know, and, if it be His will, to convey to others knowledge in modes passing all human conception ? Rather is it

not proof, when we grudge them this superiority to ourselves, that we are making our own poor faculties and our own poor conceptions the measure of theirs, and that there is nothing in reason or revelation to forbid the belief that they may have power *given them by God* to know all that is said, or done, or even thought by us, without encroaching upon the infinite and inapproachable prerogatives of God Himself ? What have they even then but what they have *received* ?

And how could one think of these holy beings without thinking of that which all of us must pass through to join them,—death ; and that which passes between death and the final state of all ? How could one help thinking of the “things after death,” of what may be in store for the soul when separated from the body ? whether it were really true, as Protestants affirm, that all time for preparation for the sight and presence of God is past ? whether there may not still remain some process through which, in the mercy of God, the souls of some at least may be required to pass, who have not died in the odour of sanctity, and yet one would hope were too good to “dwell in everlasting burnings” ? And then the thought of some kind of purgatory

would rise ; and the question would follow, What is there in Holy Scripture which denies it ? Are the texts commonly used by Protestants against a belief in purgatory, *i. e.* some kind of cleansing, by which the soul may attain that “ holiness without which we cannot see God,” really convincing and to the purpose, or not ?

And I felt that they were not so ; that the texts,—such as *e. g.* “ Where the tree falls, there it must lie,”—so commonly used to prove that the day of judgment will be sure to find a man exactly as death overtook him, bear not a natural, but only a forced application to the subject ; and that whilst there was no other that denied every kind of purgatorial cleansing in the intermediate state, there were some texts that seemed to imply that there was such.

Now I do not mean to say that these thoughts were strictly correct, or not ; but I felt that the groove in which orthodox Protestant thought is allowed to travel is narrower than the Word of God has made it ; that if men will think at all on such subjects, their thoughts are sure to travel outside of the prescribed range ; that the moment their thoughts do get outside of it, they are at

sea, with little besides their own observation to guide them; and that it is only natural and reasonable to expect that on such points the Church of Christ should be able, as commissioned by Him, to give her children safe counsel. But what most struck me was, that almost all, if not all, of these subjects came under the head of the “Communion of Saints;” and that their investigation led one into one or other of the branches of this article of the Creed.

Now then, I asked myself, is not the Communion of Saints an article of the Creed of which Protestants know nothing? Is it not one which they cannot realise? Although they have repeated it and know it by heart from childhood, is it not one on which they seldom preach, seldom talk, and seldom even think?

I could not but confess that it had been very much so with myself; and my experience of other Protestants—even Anglicans—and their sermons, whether published or only preached, and their poetry, inclined me to the belief that it was much the same with them: in fact, that they had no real or intelligent apprehension of the “Communion of Saints,” that it was with them, in fact, an unknown land—words, and little more. And yet why

is it in the Creed ? What made the Church so anxious that every child of hers should believe it ? Surely it must have some *very* important meaning, something much more real than is generally thought by Protestants, or it would not have been inserted in the Creed at all. Here, then, I saw that almost every doctrine upon which we were at issue with the Catholic Church (Invocation of Saints, Purgatory, Indulgences, even the Pope's supremacy) came directly or indirectly under this head ; and I could not help reflecting how possible, nay even probable, it was that our own undeniable ignorance and want of appreciation of this great article of the Faith might be the cause of our rejecting those doctrines.

I do not mean to say that I therefore accepted them, any or all ; but it seemed to afford me a new medium through which to look at them, and enabled me to accept them at a later period without difficulty.

But another difficulty shortly arose in my mind. It was the question concerning the validity of English Orders, which I had never before thought it necessary to inquire into. The reason why I now saw occasion to do so was, that my belief in the real objective Pre-

sence of our Blessed Lord in the Eucharistic elements had become much deeper and more real than formerly ; and my mind had been turned to what it had no distinct perception of before, viz. the imperative duty of *adoration*, *i. e.* of adoring Christ present in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. It may seem strange, and indeed it is very strange, that any should profess to believe in the Real Eucharistic Presence, and not as a natural and inevitable consequence see the necessity of Eucharistical adoration. But so it was, and so I believe it is the case still with the majority of even High-Church Anglicans ; for years I had professed my belief in, and thought I believed in, the Real Presence ; and yet it never occurred to me that I ought to adore the Body and Blood of Christ present in the consecrated elements. The language of the Prayer-Book had always appeared to me plainly to forbid such adoration ; and I therefore thought it sufficient to worship Christ as in some mysterious sense especially present to the faithful receiver, *i. e.* to him who with a true and lively faith received the Blessed Sacrament ; by means of which he received the Body and Blood of Christ, and therefore Christ Himself, into his heart. The use which

the Prayer-Book directs to be made of the remainder of the consecrated elements, and their treatment by the clergy and laity (however reverently disposed some of them may be), *absolutely forbid* the belief in any real *objective* Presence of our Blessed Lord's Body and Blood after consecration ; and it was not until I had reflected on the subject as brought to my mind by Archdeacon Denison's sermon, and afterwards by Mr. Keble's pamphlet on Eucharistic adoration, that I discovered how unreal and inconsistent my belief and practice had both up to that time been. Mr. Keble's arguments were to my mind quite convincing as to the necessity of adoration. Both Scripture and antiquity, and the practice of the Universal Church, all alike prove, as he shows, the absolute necessity of adoring our present Lord, *i. e.* His Blessed Body and Blood present on the altar in the consecrated elements. But his arguments to prove that the Church of England held the same doctrine, or that such adoration was compatible with the Church of England's teaching, however ingenious, struck me as the most painful failure. Adoration is indeed our duty (I said to myself), but the Church of England forbids it. Even if her language can be twisted into merely a denial

of some other kind of adoration, yet the vast majority of her children will ever construe it, as they always have construed it, into a denial of every kind of adoration of Christ's Blessed Body and Blood in the Holy Eucharist. And so entirely was this the case, that I myself, though a High-Church "Puseyite" (so-called) clergyman for more than seventeen years, had never dreamt of adoration being my duty, and did not know one clergyman who to my knowledge believed in or practised it.

I do not mean to say that there are no clergy who both believe in and practise Eucharistic adoration ; I only mean that I did not know any who did, or was not aware of their sentiments, though almost all my clergy friends were considered very high Churchmen.

I felt, in short, that instead of giving her children bread, the Church of England had fed them with husks or ashes ; that it was impossible to read her teaching on the subject of the Blessed Sacrament without feeling that if she meant to teach the duty of Eucharistic adoration, she had done it in language which to most persons would always appear to teach the exact opposite.

But one inquiry soon leads on to another kindred to it. What if, after all, we had no

real consecrations in the Church of England ? What if the charge laid against our orders by Catholics be true, viz. that the Apostolic Succession was broken, or the stream so vitiated at the Reformation that Anglican orders did not confer the grace of Ordination, and that our consecration of the Eucharistic elements was in consequence null and void ?

To one who thinks little of Sacraments this inquiry will appear only trivial ; and he will be unable to appreciate the anxiety which a serious doubt on this point must occasion to those who believe that Sacraments are the divinely-appointed means for uniting us to Christ, and making us partakers of the benefits of His Death and Passion.

The inquiry concerning Anglican Orders was forced upon my mind by some letters I read on the subject of *Barlow's* consecration. He was the Bishop, or reputed Bishop, who consecrated Archbishop Parker ; and it is alleged by Catholics that he had never received consecration himself.*

Now, as the validity of Anglican Orders

* Even Courayer, upon whose defence of Anglican Orders High Churchmen so much depend, admits that if Barlow were not consecrated, then were Anglican Orders vitiated past remedy.

would at once fall to the ground if it could only be proved that Archbishop Parker's consecration was not valid, inasmuch as the whole stream of English Bishops since Parker's time has flowed from him, any one will see at once that a doubt about the orders of the Bishop who consecrated Parker must be a very serious one ; and therefore, as soon as I discovered that there was considerable *prima facie* evidence against Barlow's consecration, I felt it was only common prudence to go on with the inquiry.

It is not necessary for me here to state the evidence brought forward by Catholics against the alleged fact of Barlow's consecration : but I must say this, as the result of my own inquiry, that there are certain very ugly and suspicious facts to account for ; and that whilst such grave reasons for doubting his consecration exist, it is impossible, without further evidence than has yet been produced by Protestants, to prove, or even to feel morally certain, that Barlow was ever consecrated. And I would strongly urge every Anglican to inquire carefully whether this is at all an exaggerated estimate.

But even granting, for argument's sake, that Barlow really was a duly consecrated

Bishop himself, I soon discovered that there were other and distinct grounds for doubting the validity of English Orders. For the validity of Archbishop Parker's consecration is disputed on two other grounds,—viz. 1st, that the form which was used in his consecration was insufficient to convey the grace of consecration, inasmuch as it makes not the slightest mention of the office of Bishop to which it was intended to call him, and might have served just as well for Confirmation (which appears to have afterwards occurred to the Reformers, for they altered it to the one now in use) ; and 2dly, that neither Barlow nor the Bishops who assisted him had the *right intention* for consecration, inasmuch as their view of the episcopal office, to which they meant to institute Parker, was wholly different from the Catholic view of the office and powers of a Bishop.

But further, I found that, supposing neither of the above objections existed ; and supposing, for argument's sake, Archbishop Parker had been duly consecrated,—that even then he could not carry on the succession for want of *jurisdiction* ; for Catholics affirm that jurisdiction belongs to the spiritual power, and that, as it did not reside in the Crown, it was not in the power of Queen Elizabeth, or any

temporal prince, to confer it. But by the Reformation this power had been taken from the Pope, and vested in the Crown ; and the only source from which it was then even pretended that jurisdiction flowed was the person of the sovereign. Who gave Archbishop Parker jurisdiction ? Queen Elizabeth, must be the answer. But she had it not to give ; therefore she gave none in reality, and Parker for want of it could not exercise his functions.

There are Catholic controversialists who are willing to let the whole question rest upon this point, so convincing is the proof that spiritual jurisdiction *can only* flow from a spiritual fountain, and that that spiritual fountain must be the spiritual and ecclesiastical superior of those who profess to exercise any spiritual power or authority. How was it possible to transfer this jurisdiction to the Crown ? Yet this was done professedly at the Reformation ; and it was from the Crown alone that Parker received his jurisdiction ; the very Bishops who professed to consecrate him had no other. Now whether there is any argumentative escape or not for Anglicans out of this difficulty, one thing is certain, that the whole subject is involved in great perplexity ; that there are very serious reasons for doubt and

anxiety about the very source from which Anglicans derive sacramental grace. And whilst these doubts remain, how is it possible to have *faith*? I do not mean, how can one feel *tolerably* sure that it is all right; which means, how can we feel rather surer to-day and less to-morrow, or *vice versa*, according to the apparent strength of the evidence brought before us on one side or the other; but, how is it possible to have faith in Anglican Orders or Sacraments, *i. e.* a perfect, unhesitating, and unvarying confidence, the same one day and another and always, that there has been no breach, and that the stream of grace flows uninterruptedly through Christ's own appointed channel to our own souls if we ourselves place no bar to its progress?

For my own part, I felt there were too many and too cogent reasons for *doubting* to allow me any longer to enjoy *faith*,—faith either in the Church of England's being the true representative of Christ in this land, or in the reality or efficacy of Sacraments as administered by her. As a natural consequence, I doubted the validity of my own orders, and the efficacy of my own ministrations. I did not positively disbelieve, but I doubted. I doubted the effect of my own act, when I

pronounced the sacred words of consecration ; and did not know whether I could adore, or refrain from adoring, without sin, the Body and Blood of Christ, present or not present, I knew not which, upon the altar.

But before my inquiries had quite led up to the above result, I began to feel I had no right to continue any longer to hold preferment in a Church whose very title to be considered a portion of the Catholic Church I so gravely doubted. I felt that my opinions on several very important points had become inconsistent with my subscriptions ; and that therefore, whatever might be my future course, —whether to leave her communion altogether, or to retire into private life in the capacity of a lay member,—my present duty was clear, and that was, to resign my living. And had it not been that I was conscious of not remaining from any interested motives, and that the proceeds of the benefice were mainly returned in one shape or another to the parish, I think my resignation must have taken place at even an earlier period.

However, when at last I discovered that there was this difference between my views and subscriptions, and saw no probability of again reconciling them, after much and pain-

ful deliberation and earnest prayer for God's guidance, I went to the Bishop of the diocese, and resigned my charge into his hands.

This I did on the 6th February, and (Sunday intervening) I announced my resignation on the 8th.

I did not imagine that it would take so many by surprise ; for I fancied that what had occupied my own mind so long could hardly have escaped your observation, and that recent events, or one in particular, must in some measure have prepared you.

I allude particularly to Mr. De Burgh's secession, which had taken place a few days before ; and having alluded to him by name, I feel it necessary to remove a mistake into which some of you have fallen regarding him. Some of you, I am led to suppose, have attributed my change of views to his influence : but this is a great mistake, as any one must have discovered who has taken the trouble to follow me thus far ; for it was not until some time after the reopening of the church that I had any acquaintance with Mr. De Burgh, and when I first saw him, and indeed up to the time of his leaving Lawshall, I felt myself more nearly becoming a Catholic than he seemed to be.

So far, indeed, was he from being the cause of my leaving you, that he helped to keep me at Lawshall longer than in all probability I should have remained, had not my hopes revived and my faith been somewhat rekindled by his earnest zeal and faith in the Church of England.

Younger by many years than myself, he did not know that others had embarked upon the very same voyage as he was then on, and had put forth the very same views and principles as those by means of which he and some other earnest and talented young clergymen were then striving to make the Church of England in practice what they conceived her to be in theory. But he had faith in the Church of England, and *his* faith for a time served as it were as a substitute for my own; and I did my utmost to give life to and to carry on a dying cause, whilst all the time I could not help feeling that the finger of death was on it. But he came not amongst you for naught ; many were the hearts which responded to his earnest calls to repentance ; and though he was with us for a few weeks only, I cannot help thinking but that by his hand God sowed some, if not much, good seed among you. He left Lawshall to undertake

another sphere of duty, which his friends, and not his own inclination, urged him to undertake ; and it happened with him much as might have been expected,—the tie which held him to the Church of England, and which seemed to him strong whilst he saw her at work in an atmosphere of his own creation, snapped asunder when he had to face her in her real and undisguised proportions : and then he became aware of his mistake ; that mistake seemed to be this,—that the Churches of England and Rome, though disagreeing upon certain points of doctrine, not articles of faith, were still one ; that there was no great gulf of principle between them, which whosoever would pass, could not, without undoing the very groundwork and principle of the Reformation.

When he left the Church of England, I may have felt more strongly than before the unsuitableness of my remaining your minister, even though I did not to any extent profit by it ; and it may, as I think it did, appear to me an indication of Providence that *the time* had come for me also to retire : but on my own views regarding the position and claims of the Church of England I am not conscious that his coming to Lawshall or ultimate sub-

mission to the Catholic Church had any influence.

And after I had resigned my benefice, the question still remained, What was I to do ? Should I remain a member of the Church of England, freed from the obligation of subscriptions, and therefore free to express my opinions in any way I might think right, with a view to relieving her in time from the trammels with which an undue obsequiousness to the State had bound her; or was it my duty to leave her ?

Had it been merely a question of better or worse,—of belonging to a “branch of the Church” crippled by State influence, or one entirely free,—had this been the question, I should have considered it a duty to remain still in the Church of England, and work as best I could for her deliverance ; but it was no longer a question of this kind with me. If I could not have faith in my own ministrations, I could have as little in those of any other Anglican priest ; and all the inquiries which had led me to doubt the validity of my own orders, had led me to disbelieve the fiction of “the branch-church” theory altogether. That theory I could no longer regard as any thing else but an absurdity. As if it were not con-

trary to all analogy for a tree to have visible branches without a visible trunk, or for branches to live any longer than they were in union with the trunk ; or as if all the branches, instead of growing out of the trunk, grew directly out of an invisible root, and could be in communion with the root whilst separated from each other ! Or as if the limbs of the natural body could be in communion with the heart, or source of vitality, without being in communion with each other ; or as if the separation of any one member from the rest were not inevitably followed by, or rather were not the same as, a separation from the whole !

Indeed, I had so long thought of the various theories by which Anglicans and others have endeavoured to account for the divided state of Christendom, and to reconcile it with the retention of spiritual life, and was so utterly dissatisfied with all of them, that there seemed to me to be but one thing to fall back upon ; and therefore, as far as reason and argument went, I was already convinced that the (Roman) Catholic Church was my only home or place of rest, inasmuch as every thing conspired to show me that she alone was the inheritor of Christ's promises to His Church.

But so inveterate are the prejudices in

which every Protestant is born and bred, that it requires almost a greater effort than one is capable of, to act, even at the last, in spite of them ; to tear oneself away from a system to which all one's early associations are attached, and in which one's nearest friends are still living, and to join oneself to a communion of which one has heard ill from one's earliest recollections.

It is not possible for any one who has not gone through it himself to conceive the severity of the trial, from the time that the first grave doubt has taken hold of the mind to that in which a man comes at last as a penitent to his long-neglected parent's feet, and begs for pardon and admission into the household and family of Christ.

No one who has not passed through it himself can form an idea of what it is ; and to suppose that any conscientious person would go through it as an intellectual gratification, or from any other motive than a stern sense of duty, is to suppose what every one acquainted with the anguish it occasions would declare to be an impossibility. Even to one to whom the sacrifice, in a temporal point of view, is not so great (as I thank God was my own case), but that enough still remains for

the maintenance of himself and those dependent upon him,—even to him, to go out, as Abraham did, from his own country and kin into a strange land, and to know that henceforth he will be suspected and regarded as an alien by his former friends; that between him and many of those whom he loves there will be a great and almost impassable gulf; and that, do what he may, they will be unable to dispossess themselves of the feeling that he is no longer to them what he was before: to know that his older relatives will be in their hearts afraid of him, and as it were by instinct wish to withdraw their children from his influence; and that, however kindly friends may feel in their hearts, there must henceforth be between him and them “a dislocation of sympathies,” to say the least;—to know and to feel all this, and much more, must it not be a trial indeed to any one of ordinary feeling,—a trial which nothing but the grace of God and an approving conscience can carry one through? But what in addition, and above all, must the trial be to one who has others dependent on him, and who knows that in order to follow the dictates of conscience he must give up that which is his only known means of providing them with bread! It seems as

if human nature could not bear so great a strain ; and unassisted it could not. Yet many have had faith given to them equal even to this ordeal ; and for many more (it is to be feared) the same severe trial is still in store. God grant that as their day is, so may be their strength !

It is only due to myself to tell you that it was not owing to me,—at least I proposed what would easily have prevented it,—that upon my resignation being announced, the services in the church were interrupted, and every thing thrown into confusion.

As soon as I became convinced that my departure was only a question of time, I wrote to the patron of the living, and, without assigning any reason, told him that it would be a relief to myself to resign my charge if I could place it in suitable hands, and asking permission to nominate my successor. It was not that I had any private object, or even a friend to serve, or that I had any one in particular in view whom I wanted to see in my place. I would not, even if I had been able, have made choice of a *very* high Churchman, from a feeling that he ought in consistency to do the same as I was about to do. But I did earnestly wish that I might be al-

lowed to intrust my flock to one in whom I could feel confidence; and that the care of you might not fall to a chance purchaser of the living, who might be of my own opinions, or the contrary, and might possibly think it his duty to undo all, or a great deal of what, I had set on foot for your benefit.

I thought, too, that after what I had done for the church,—I say not this boastfully,—and considering that the patron had already received the value of my life-interest in the living, and that I was still scarcely middle-aged, he might not unreasonably have made me this concession. But it was not so to be. The permission I asked for was refused ; and I was even desired to give due notice of the time at which I intended to leave ; for what purpose can easily be imagined.

However, the one thing which I wished to prevent was the sale of the living : and that I rendered legally impracticable by resigning the living without any further notice of my intention, and leaving those whose duty it was to do so to inform the patron of the vacancy ; for a living cannot legally be sold whilst it is vacant.

And when I called upon the Bishop of the diocese to give up my charge into his hands,

I offered to be at the expense of a second curate to assist in the duties of the parish (which were too heavy for one), that there might be no stoppage or disorder in the services, but that they might go on as usual until a new incumbent should come to direct them. But my offer was declined by his Lordship, on the ground that “the patron might complain if he allowed of such an arrangement”! All that was in my power to do to prevent disorder, I did. I engaged the organist and schoolmistress for five months longer; I continued the provisions for warming and cleaning the church; and every thing I could think of which was still in my power I gladly attended to, in order to leave things ready to hand for my successor, that he might, if so inclined, allow all to go on smoothly as before, or alter them gently, according to his judgment. It is not necessary for me to tell you what really happened, who know even better than I do the sad disorder which followed; but I would ask you this question: Could such have taken place if either my request of the patron, or my proposal to the Bishop, had been complied with? But it has all been ordered, doubtless, for the best, and for the furtherance of truth; and I would leave it to

your own reflection to discover how far the poor Church of England, or faith in her divine mission, has gained by the immediate cessation of daily prayer, the absence of all Lenten services, the closing of the church even upon Ascension Day, and the one solitary Easter Communion during you know how many months, which were the consequence of the Bishop's and patron's anxiety for your spiritual welfare.

My dear friends, I do not know how to ask you this question without appearing to indulge in unseemly satire ; but that is not my feeling. I have described what took place in the gentlest language I can think of ; but when I reflect on what existed before I left you, and that what followed was supposed to be for the better,—a sort of Protestant Reformation, in fact,—I hardly know how to characterise my feelings at the way in which, under a professed regard for the purity of religion, you were deprived of your privileges. And when I think of the way in which a laborious and most exemplary curate was dismissed, upon whom not the slightest suspicion of romanising tendencies could fairly rest, who was, in fact, wholly uninfluenced by my difficulties, as the Bishop knew, and

whose only wish was faithfully to carry out the directions of the Church of England ; who had never done any thing but what should have drawn on him the favour and encouragement of his diocesan ;—when I remember that it was with the Bishop's full knowledge of the number and nature of the services in Lawshall church, and with something more than tacit consent, that he left his Lordship's presence in London to carry on those services (with one exception*) exactly as they had hitherto been performed ; and that he was within a few days, without any intervening notice, sternly commanded to alter those services entirely, or at once to leave his cure ;—when I think of all this, done in total ignorance of the feelings of the parishioners, in ignorance (until within a few days) even of the very situation of the parish,—done by one who ought to be at least somewhat acquainted with his clergy, but who, upon my going to him, did not know me even by my name or incumbency ; who supposed I had only lately come into his diocese, although I had been in it for almost eleven years ; although my church had been closed for more than twelve months, and afterwards re-opened under circumstances

* The division of the Morning Prayer.

which had been the talk of thousands, and the subject of comment in various journals ;—when I think of all this, I cannot help feeling some little tinge of bitterness in my sorrow that such a farce should pass for episcopal care ; and cannot help wondering that of the Church of England's own clergy or laity not one should have come forward at the time to call public attention to such a melancholy instance of episcopal incompetency.

It is for your sake, my friends, and the Church of England's sake, that I have recorded these facts : for your sakes, that you may be led to reflect upon them ; and for the Church of England's sake, that she may rouse herself, and try to exercise the powers which she professes to have ; that she may try to be real, try to act upon her professed principles, by means of which she will be led to see her misery, and to escape from the fatal schism which is the cause of it. But the fact is, High-Church Anglicans dare not even wish that a Bishop of tolerably “orthodox” views, however incapable, should retire, or make room for another, for fear that other should be worse. They know that with the appointment of Bishops resting with the Crown, which is virtually the Prime Minister (and

which always must be the case so long as the Church of England is established), and whilst almost any qualifications but those of fitness for the episcopate are looked to, the chances are always against the appointment of any one whom they themselves would select for the office ; that any thing, in short, is better than an active ultra-Protestant Bishop, who will be sure to bring trouble upon them, and discredit on the Church of England.

It is all in vain for them to groan in their hearts. The iron hand of the State, the supremacy of the Crown even in causes and things spiritual, which they have all subscribed to, is upon them, and effectually crushes out resistance. They can only sigh, and look forward to a golden age, never, alas, coming, when their Church shall still have the benefit of State protection, still enjoy its tithes and glebe-lands, and also be empowered to make laws for her own children ; and somehow or other, they know not how,—whether by popular election, or the choice of Convocation, or in whatever other way,—be able to elect her own Bishops.

O baseless fabric of a dream ! As if such a state of things ever could come to pass ; as if the very liberating of the Church of Eng-

land from her State fetters would not be the signal for an intestine warfare, which would inevitably end in a grand disruption ; when the great majority of High Churchmen would surely join the Holy Catholic Church, and the remainder amalgamate with some one or other of the thousand dissenting denominations, from which they even now differ on no other principle than that of establishment !

O my dear friends, if you could but see things as they are, as one is enabled to see them when the films of Protestant prejudice have by God's mercy fallen from one's eyes, you would wonder indeed at the delusion in which the great mass of our countrymen have been born and bred, and for which they are even jealous as if it were the truth of God : —as if it were almost a stretch of charity, or a compromise of truth, to regard Catholics as other than idolaters ;—to believe that they are really Christians ;—or to allow that their whole system is not a dishonour to Christ, instead of being, what every Catholic *knows* to be true, and would seal with his dying breath, the very cause of Christ Himself, the revelation of His Holy Spirit, and the only system on earth which has Christ for its centre, and His worship for its all-pervading spirit ; in

which the holy mystery of the Incarnation is realised, and its blessed and glorious fruits brought within the reach, and applied to the souls, of lost men.

Yes, dear friends, it is this of which Protestants, whatever they may think or say, are really ignorant. They have no realisation of the great mysterious doctrine of the *Incarnation*. They profess that they believe in it, and they think they believe in it; but *realise* it they do not. They do not in their hearts realise the great unspeakably mysterious fact that *God became man*, that for nine months He condescended to occupy a pure Virgin's womb; otherwise it would be absolutely impossible for them to scoff as they do at the reverence paid by Catholics to His Blessed Virgin Mother. That reverence is of a totally different kind from that entertained towards the Creator. It is not simply unlikely, but it is absolutely *impossible*, to offer to one whom we know to be a creature the same kind of worship or homage as that which we offer to God the Creator of all things; and Catholics know this, and realise it with an intense reality of which Protestants can form no idea: but they do honour and reverence, and in a lower sense worship, the Blessed Virgin Mary,

as one beyond all other created beings dear to God, and powerful with Christ to obtain from Him by means of her intercession the blessings which we stand in need of. They know that to honour the Mother who bore their Redeemer is to honour their Redeemer Himself; that to love her is to love Him, and only to imitate the example of their Blessed Redeemer Himself, who must have loved her, who was nearer to Him than any other created being, of whom He Himself was part,—“bone of her bone, and flesh of her flesh,”—with an intense love only surpassed by, yet partaking in some measure in, the mysteriousness of His love for His consubstantial and co-eternal Father. No, they do not realise that awful mystery. They talk of it as commonly as of any thing else ; but it is like many other of the common things of this life, or of nature, so common, that they have never thought of its great, real, deep meaning, or of the consequences which inevitably flow from it. Go and retire into your heart of hearts, and ask what is meant by God being born ; by God being nursed and tended by a human mother ; supported on her knees, carried in her arms, watched over through boyhood ; cared for, loved, and tended

with all a mother's love and solicitude in life and death ;—and ask yourself whether it is possible for us, for whom God became man and died, and who by holy Baptism have been made the Blessed Virgin Mary's children (for by our very ingrafting into her Divine Son we have become His brothers and sisters, and been made partakers of His deified human nature), to honour and reverence her too highly, so long as we do not encroach upon the honour and adoration which are due only to God.

Try to realise the Communion of Saints, of which the Incarnation is the root, and the reverence paid to the Blessed Virgin the first ripe fruit. Try to realise the oneness with Christ into which the gift of the Holy Spirit in Baptism introduces us. Try to make this a reality to yourselves, and to feel that by that very oneness with Christ we are made one with His holy Mother and all His saints; that we have been made members of a new spiritual family, of which Christ is the head, and in which His spotless Mother must needs occupy the next place of honour; and you will feel that to honour His blessed Mother is, in fact, to honour her Divine Son—that their interests, so to speak, are inseparable: and

you will be able to feel in your hearts the reason why they who have professed to honour the Son, but have endeavoured to do so by withholding from His blessed Mother that reverence in which the Church has ever held her, have gone on to dishonour the Son likewise, and have fallen into all kinds of heresies regarding His divine or human nature. Should not this notorious fact suffice to warn Protestants of their danger, and to convince them that worship such as the Catholic Church offers to the Blessed Virgin Mary is, in fact, only the true test and safeguard of faith in the Incarnation ?

But there was another subject which had long been upon my mind, and that was, the almost total—if not total—disregard and neglect of the power of *Absolution*, which the Church of England professes to confer on her priests at their ordination.

How is it, I asked myself, that it is so seldom exercised; so seldom asked for by the people; so seldom pressed upon them by the clergy?

Having been once appointed to preach a Visitation Sermon, I had it for some time in contemplation to ask the assembled clergy for an answer to these questions; but my courage

failed as the time for preaching approached, and knowing I should only be considered as rash and indiscreet, and a troubler of Israel, I chose a less disturbing subject. But what a reproach to the Church of England,—that one of her clergy should be afraid to address his clerical brethren on a subject of such vital importance, because, forsooth, he knew that the great majority of them would account him only as a disturber; and that the subject, to say the least, was considered so delicate and inapproachable that it ought to be left to older heads and abler hands than his to bring it forward! As if there was the least chance of the older heads and abler hands having any thing to do with it; as if it was not a subject which they had forgotten, or at any rate determined to say nothing about! Whilst all the time the laity of the Church of England were dying without so much as a suspicion that their clergy were empowered to give them individual absolution; and not only this, but whilst a hollow and profitless system of ministerial visiting of the sick was going on, which had so little life and reality in it, and was, in fact, such a miserable routine, that earnest clergymen, who felt the greatness of the stake, and the impossibility

of getting at the hearts of the sick and dying, were weary and disgusted with it: for even *then*, when death seemed to be drawing near, if, with a view to aid the dying to see his sins, that he might repent of them, and not go out of the world, as seems too often the case, with a load of forgotten and never-repent ed sins upon him, a clergyman ventured to question him upon his past life, there was always a fear that either the sick person or his relatives would consider the question impertinent, or too great an inquisitiveness into a man's inner life, and that some displeasure or offence would be occasioned by the inquiry. And yet, perhaps, one knew that the poor dying sinner had been guilty of great sin; though there seemed to be no painful recollection of it, no remorse upon the conscience. "Have you any thing particular upon your mind which troubles you, and for which you have especial reason to hope God will be merciful to you?" Has no clergyman asked a dying man or woman this question, whilst all the time his knowledge of that man or woman's previous life was leading him to the answer that there was this, or that, or several mortal sins which especially needed forgiveness? And yet has he not received this answer to

his inquiry, “ O no, sir ; nothing in particular”? And so the poor creature dies, without any confession, and not improbably without any particular repentance either.

O Anglicans, Anglicans, what are you doing ? You profess to believe in “ the benefit of absolution,”—you profess to believe in its efficacy when pronounced over the penitent,—what are you doing, that your people know nothing of its benefit? that they suspect the very mention of it, or of confession? Why is it that you do not tell them *plainly* of that power which you believe was conferred on you at your ordination? Why do not you openly lay claim to and assert that power, and invite your people to avail themselves of it? Is it not for this reason, that few of you have ever *confessed* yourselves ; because few, if any of you, have sought the benefit of absolution ; because you, no less than your people, are unconfessed and unabolved, and therefore show by your own practice the real value which you attach to, and the real faith which you have in, confession and absolution in your own hearts?

But this is not the only reason : for there are some few Anglican clergy who really do feel what a blessed help and consolation it

would be to themselves and others to have absolution a reality, instead of mere words, as it is in the Prayer-Book ; and they do not doubt that Christ's priests have His authority to forgive sins in His name : but they have so little confidence, and justly, in their own fitness to pronounce the absolving words, in consequence of their own want of training and unfitness for the office of confessors, that in their hearts they would be afraid of exercising the office if any penitent came and asked them to do so.

Speaking for myself, dear friends, I know that it was so : I felt in my heart that Christ had left authority with His ministers to forgive the penitent in His name ; I knew that to me individually, at my ordination, the Bishop had said, “ Receive the Holy Ghost ; whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven ;” and I knew that those were not mere words,—that they were witnesses to a great and awful reality somewhere existing. But when I thought of the opinions and practice of the Bishops and clergy of the Church of England generally, and of the estimation in which the attempt to exercise such an authority would be regarded by the laity ; and moreover of the utter *want of training*, not

only in myself, but of the clergy generally, for the direction of souls ; that that kind of instruction is never dreamt of for a candidate for Holy Orders, or even, in the vast majority of cases at least, cultivated by the clergy themselves,—when I thought of all this, I felt that I could do no more than put before you, as I did, the plain language of the Ordination and Visitation services in the Prayer-Book, and express my belief in the benefit and efficacy of absolution, as an institution of Christ, and recommend you to avail yourselves of it. But *there* I was forced to stop ; and there *you stopped*. It was a full stop, indeed, for us both, for you and me ; and with good reason, for it is hardly possible for any one to swim against the whole tide of Protestantism which sets in at this point ; and whoever will set himself to practise absolution, *i. e.* to make his preaching or his belief in absolution a reality, to seek it for his own benefit, or to confer it for the benefit of others, will very soon find the dilemma in which the profession of the Church of England in this particular places her children, whether clergy or laity. Let them only try, and see whether it is not so.

And to a Catholic the reason is plain

enough. Confession and absolution are only parts of a whole, they are but parts of the Sacrament of Penance ; and as the Church of England has thought fit to renounce the *sacramental* character of penance,—to deny, in fact, that it is one of the Sacraments of the Gospel,—it is only natural that to the part of it which she does retain in words she should be unable to give any reality or efficacy in practice, or that she should be contradictory and self-condemning.

The very attempt to make it a reality, or to put it into practice, unless where this may have been done with a very superior class of penitents, has only brought scandal and discredit upon those who have attempted it.

Only think, dear friends, of one clergyman publicly accusing another of “*blasphemy*” because the latter asserted this authority,—because he maintained that Christ had given to His ministers the power of saying to a *penitent* in His name, “I absolve thee of all thy sins;” whilst over that very clergyman who so accused his brother the words had been pronounced, “Receive the Holy Ghost ; whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven,” &c., and whilst that very clergyman had expressed his full assent and consent to

all that is in the Prayer-Book, to the very Ordination service in particular in which these words occur !

Think of this, dear friends,—*blasphemy* to wish to exercise the power thus solemnly given ! Blasphemy to suppose that those solemn words give any *real* authority to the person to whom they are addressed ! Blasphemy to say this ; but only right and proper and agreeable with Protestant orthodoxy to say that the “words relate to no real power now possessed by the clergy, only to a power of remitting the sentence of excommunication which people formerly were subjected to ;” that as excommunication is now a dead letter, so the power of undoing excommunication has died with it ; or, in fact, that the whole thing is but “a relic of Popery” !

What a farce then, nay what a mockery of the Most High, must it not be, to go on pretending to confer such authority in words so solemn, “Receive the Holy Ghost ; whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven” ! Surely if this language does not mean what any one would suppose it must mean, it is time to erase such a blot out of your Prayer-Books ; and time, too, for the clergy of the Church of England to cease to declare their

full assent and consent to all which is contained in those Prayer-Books.

But in truth, my friends, I believe that the Church of England claims no more authority, even in words, in regard to absolution than that which the Church of Christ must ever lay claim to ; and she is not wrong in what she thus, so far as words go, does claim. Her fault lies in what she has omitted, in what she has done away with : and for that reason it is that the portion retained is so unintelligible and unpractical ; so alien in character to the teaching and belief of the majority of the clergy, and so opposed to the feelings of the great mass of her lay members. *Particular absolution without particular confession is a simple absurdity.* And who does not know the storm which immediately rises and overturns the public mind directly any mention is made of confession ; as if the man who teaches its desirableness even must either be insane, or so alien in his convictions to the "Protestant faith" that his secession is looked forward to almost as a certainty, or else he is regarded as a traitor to the Church of England ?

To alter such a state of things, you must change the whole aspect of the clergy. You

must teach men to regard them as something very different from what they now consider them ; you must restore the superhuman element. I do not mean that they are not, as a body, good and religious men,—as good and religious as are to be met with any where; but before people will believe them to be possessed, by virtue of their office, with this superhuman authority, they must be felt by the people to belong to a superhuman order,—an order indeed of men naturally of like passions with others, but, through the grace of Ordination, possessed of peculiar gifts, and brought into a peculiar relationship both to God and men. They must cease, in short, to be exactly like other men ; for the world is quick enough to know its own. Absolution in the Church of England is an unreality, the hollowness of which will soon show itself to those who in earnest try to carry it out ; and the Church of England, by claiming it in words, and rendering it next to impossible in practice (as she has done by denying the sacramental character of penance, by omitting from the education of her clergy every thing like preparation for the office of confessors, and by lowering the clergy themselves to the level of ordinary men by allowing them to

marry), bears just sufficient testimony to the benefit of absolution to be a witness against herself. The consequence is no other than might have been expected ; and the periodical invitation of the poor clergyman, “ Let him come to me, or some other discreet and learned minister of God’s word, and open his grief, that he may receive the benefit of absolution,” is uttered without the faintest expectation on his part of any one accepting it, and listened to by the people in simple amazement.

But the same uncertainty which hangs over one ministerial act in the Church of England, affects in its measure every other ; and in proportion as any one becomes alive to the benefit of priestly absolution, he may be expected to feel the necessity of seeking it where it may be had for certain.

For what comfort can there be derived from absolution without faith ? And how can there be faith where the very authority of the minister is involved in uncertainty ?—or even, as in too many instances, is repudiated even by the Bishops* and clergy of the Church of

* Since the above was written, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London have both formally declared that “ the practice of private confession and absolution is not authorised by the Church of England, but calculated to bring scandal on the Church ;” and, acting upon

England themselves? Faith in an uncertainty is no faith at all.

But independently of particular doctrines, such as I have before gone into, there is one question which supersedes every other, and which latterly had a great influence on my mind.

It ought, I think, to have such on every mind ; and a careful investigation into it at the outset would save an inquirer much trouble. It is this : Is it likely, or possible, that Christ should have left Himself without any authorised representative upon earth, who should speak with His own and therefore infallible authority to mankind, to warn them against all counterfeits of truth, and to point out to anxious inquirers the one narrow way to eternal life amidst the multitude of paths which lead to death ? Is it to be believed that Christ has thus left Himself unrepresented by an infallible teacher, and mankind in danger of mistaking darkness for light ? Now the ready answer of Protestants to this

this belief, have suspended a clergyman for practising what they declare to be thus unauthorised : the Bishop of Rochester also has joined in his condemnation, forbidding him to officiate again in his diocese, and expressing a “ hope that every husband and father will strenuously resist the attempt to introduce the practice of confession.”

inquiry is, that God has left His Word—the Bible—to guide His people along the way of life. But the question then instantly follows, How is a person to understand the Bible; or to be sure, amidst such a variety of conflicting interpretations, that what appears to him to be its meaning is indeed such ?

Many are the answers which may be given to this question, but they resolve themselves at last into two: one is, that you must do your best, by diligent study and prayer, to arrive at its meaning; and the other, that you must accept that interpretation which the Church gives of it.

The former is the Protestant answer, the latter the Catholic: one refers you to private judgment, the other to the authority of the Church; *and there is nothing between the two.* Protestants, then, who rest upon the former, *i. e.* private judgment, if they will be consistent, must not find fault with any one who conscientiously arrives at a different view from themselves,—no matter how different; if he has but done, or professes to have done, as they direct, *i. e.* prayed for the Holy Spirit's guidance, and studied Holy Scripture, they have no right to say that he is in error.

The legitimate inference from this rule of

interpretation is, first, that one man's view may be as correct as another's; next, that both may be wrong. But men act as if both might be right: that is to say, though their views of Holy Scripture are in some most important respects diametrically opposite, they still maintain that each may be right in the sight of God ; consequently that it is bigotry to contend for "forms of faith," that "his faith cannot be wrong whose life is right." And it is only a necessary consequence to add, that *exact truth* is of no great, if of any, importance; indeed, that it is questionable whether there is such a thing as positive truth ; that each man's opinions are the truth to him, at any rate. People don't often admit this in words; but it is what their theory comes to in practice. Now the Anglican sees that this is only the legitimate result of such a theory ; that an almost infinite variety of opinions, each claiming to be the true sense of the holy Word of God, is sure to spring up from this (as he calls it) "abuse of private judgment ;" and therefore he comes between the two, as it were,—does not give up private judgment altogether, nor yet the authority of the Church, but puts a *drag* of his own invention on each of them. To the Protestant

he says, “ You must *use*, but not *abuse*, your private judgment” in the interpretation of Holy Scripture ; and to the Catholic he says, “ I am willing to submit to the authority of the Church as an interpreter ; but only to that interpretation which the Church Universal,—Roman and Greek and Anglican combined,—or the Church before the great schism of East from West took place, has given of it.”

But how, it may be asked, is this interpretation to be arrived at ? “ O, we have the three Creeds,” he answers, “ containing all the Articles of Faith of necessity to be believed, and (as the Church of England in one of her canons teaches) nothing is to be taught as the sense of Holy Scripture but that which the ancient Fathers have gathered out of the same ;” that is to say, that the ancient Fathers (of the three first centuries, say) are to be our guides to its interpretation.

But can any reflecting person maintain that this is narrowing the field of private judgment,—or that this rule of interpretation is, after all, any thing but mere private judgment—use or abuse of it, whichever you please,—or that it provides an anxious inquirer with any thing like a sure foundation upon which to rest his hope, much less his

faith, that he has arrived at the true meaning of Holy Scripture ? As if we were not competent to judge for ourselves of the sense of a single volume of the dimensions of the Holy Bible ; but that we were competent to search through countless volumes of, to most men, unintelligible Fathers, and decide upon the balance of their combined testimonies !

Surely every one who has tried to palm-off such a deceit upon his own mind must have been dissatisfied with his success,—must have felt, at any rate at times, that in professing to interpret Holy Scripture by such a standard, he was, in fact, merely adopting the language of a party ; for this simple reason, that not one in a hundred of those who profess such a standard is competent to use it.

The generality of men surely are incompetent to decide for themselves what is the unanimous or even the prevailing opinion of the Fathers, and are therefore under the necessity of accepting some other guidance than their own upon the subject ; they must either accept the judgment of individuals whom they consider competent guides, or they must accept the decision (if such there be) of the religious body to which they belong.

But the Church of England, even though

she professes to regard the judgment of the Fathers, does not hold herself or her members *bound* by such judgment. She says, indeed, that her preachers must be careful not to teach differently from what the said ancient Fathers have gathered out of Holy Scripture, and that in controversies of faith “the Church hath authority;” but what Church is here meant, and what amount of authority is claimed for it, or how her preachers are to be sure that what they preach is according to the judgment of the Fathers,—these are points which she leaves in the profoundest uncertainty.

The Church Universal, or at least a general council, which is considered the representative of the Universal Church, she says, “may err, and has erred, even in matters of faith;” therefore still more she herself may err, and may have erred even at the Reformation; therefore even the Fathers may have erred, and therefore every one may have erred, and may err again and again, even in matters of faith; and therefore there is nothing like certainty nor ground for faith in the whole world; and, for all we know, even the most vital doctrines (as they are generally considered) may be only erroneous interpretations of the Word of

God, and it may possibly be the case that the opinions of modern Unitarians, or any other modern or ancient heretics, are the right exposition of Holy Scripture. For if there be no infallible interpreter of the Word of God, it follows necessarily that there can be no infallible interpretation. Such is the uncertainty in which, after all, the Church of England leaves her children, and such the inextricable confusion in which the anxious inquirer is left, who distrusts his own judgment, and yet knows of no other interpreter or interpretation to which he may confidently and safely leave the decision.

But how different is the teaching of the Catholic Church ! She says not only that the Church of Christ taught truly in the beginning, but that she has never ceased to teach the Truth ; that Christ has not put the light of Truth "under a bushel," where no one can find it, but on "a candlestick," where all who are not blind may "see the light;" that Christ promised to be with His Church all days to the very end of the world ; that His Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, whose office it is to "guide into all truth," should never leave His Church, but be her ever-present Teacher, and that those who wish to know

the will of Christ have only to look to her and accept her teaching; that Christ Himself has guaranteed her infallibility, through the teaching of the Holy Spirit, in all matters of faith, and therefore that to believe what she teaches is nothing else but to believe the Holy Spirit: and, moreover, that the voice of this His Church is not to be hunted after in the dusty volumes of ancient writers, but set forth with the audible tongue of a living and visible Church, which, as a “city set on a hill, cannot be hid,” but is visible to all men; that all mankind, learned and unlearned, poor and rich, are equally bound to submit to her judgment; that what is the rule of faith to one is equally so to all, without distinction or respect of persons, and is so clear and unmistakable, that the “wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein.” Her language to all alike is this, “This is the Catholic Faith. This is what the Holy Spirit teaches. This is Christ’s will, proclaimed by me His authorised and infallible representative. Believe it, and live; reject it, and die.”

And here, dear friends, is ground for *faith*; because, believing in Christ’s promise of guidance to His Church, you believe in Christ Himself.

There is but one inquiry which any one need make who believes that Christ's own promise cannot fail, and that is, Who, or which, is the Church to which that promise was given? Who is she, Lord, that I may believe? If I can only tell which is Thy Church, I want no other guarantee that what she teaches me in Thy name is the Truth. And this is the inquiry to which I before alluded, as one which ought to be made at the outset,—as one which would save the trouble of inquiry into the truth of particular doctrines.

The Church of England, as I said before, has disclaimed such infallible guidance for herself and the whole Church; and by so doing has forfeited all claim to be regarded as the representative of Christ, or the inheritor of His promises. *She has disclaimed infallibility; how then can she ask for faith in her teaching as divine?* She throws her children back upon *private judgment*; how then can they better exercise it than by seeking the guidance of an infallible Church,—for where else can they build upon a *sure foundation*?

Thus, dear friends, I have endeavoured to set before you some of my principal reasons for leaving you, and resigning a charge which at one time I supposed would only terminate with my life.

Every thing led me to the belief, and forced on me the conviction, that the claim of the “Church of England” to represent the Holy Catholic Church of Christ is an unsound one; that she is nothing more than a human institution, three hundred years old, not the Church and Kingdom of Christ upon earth, which He Himself instituted, and to which alone His promises are given; and that concern for my own soul demanded that I should seek for salvation where alone Christ has covenanted to bestow it, that is to say, in His “Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church,” built by Christ Himself upon St. Peter as the “Rock,” united in one body, and cemented with one faith, under the chief pastorship of his successor, against which Christ promised that “the gates of Hell should never prevail.”

It was ever my earnest endeavour to convince you of the necessity of belonging to Christ’s Holy Catholic Church, as the means of belonging to Christ Himself; and the solemn step I have lately taken, and for which

I know I must one day give account, must convince you better than any words of mine can do, to which Church alone I believe in my heart it is both my duty and yours to belong.

There is but one Church, after all—one Holy Catholic Church—founded by Christ Himself, and inheriting His promises, which will go on till the end of time gathering into her bosom “such as shall be saved.” The world may rise up against her again, as it has often done before ; but her children need have no fear, *for she can never fail.*

She never will, and never can, teach any thing but the Truth ; for she has the presence of the Spirit of Truth Itself to guide her : and though evil men and evil spirits may do their worst, they will never be able to shake her from that sure foundation, that sure “Rock,” on which she was placed by Christ.

Out of this Church there can be no peace for the anxious ; for out of it there can be no certainty, and therefore no ground for faith.

That God, in His infinite love, may bring you, and all other wanderers, into that one true fold ; that He may grant you to enjoy within it that true tranquillity of mind which is nowhere else to be met with in this life ;

and that, living in His faith and fear here,
you may obtain hereafter those still greater
blessings which He has in store for them, and
them only, who love Him, is the sincere and
constant prayer of

Yours ever faithfully and affectionately
in Christ,

EVAN BAILLIE.

TIVERTON,

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